



Tourism Advisory Council Meeting

Wednesday, May 31, 2023

633 3rd Ave

37th Floor Boardroom

New York, NY

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Webcast address: <https://youtube.com/live/XzcvERKMaWc?feature=share>

AGENDA

- I. Approval of Minutes Cristyne Nicholas
- II. Chair's Report Cristyne Nicholas
- III. I LOVE NY Report Ross Levi & Rich Gagliano
 - A. Tourism Budget
 - B. Marketing Efforts
 - C. Tourism Programming & Industry Support
 - D. Funding Updates
- IV. Guest Speaker: Steve Dubnik, President/CEO & Sara Poe, Vice President of Marketing and Communications for the Strong National Museum of Play
- V. Member Updates & New Business

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 7, 2023
NYC Office, 633 3rd Avenue
11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Tourism Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

"Draft – Subject to Board Approval"

Date: Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Location: State Capital (Blue Room). Albany, NY

Attendance:

TAC Members

In person: Cristyne Nicholas, Natasha Caputo, Dan Fuller, David Filipiak, Kelly Blazosky

Called in: Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, George Ntim, Katherine Nicholls, Valerie Knoblauch, Alexandra Stanton, Assemblyman Danny O'Donnell, Gabriel Lewenstein

ESD / NYS Staff

Ross Levi, Richard Gagliano, Sara Emmert, Linda Teca

Guests

Roni Weiss, Greg Marshall, Bob Provost. Greg LaDuca, Josiah Brown, Tom Martinelli, Katheryn Bamberger

Meeting called to order: 11:01 AM

CRISTYNE NICHOLAS:

I. Attendance and Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve minutes – Natasha Caputo
- Minutes approved – David Filipiak

II. Chair's Report

- Welcome to Albany, it is nice to be here. It's our first time in this room since Covid.
- I want to thank everyone for coming to the Capital today. Today is also Lodging and Destination Advocacy conference hosted by New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association.
- A big part of why we are meeting in Albany is so that TAC members could also be part of this event to advocate for our tourism industry, so thank you to those attending.
- Some of the main advocacy issues that have been the focus for the tourism industry for this legislative session include increasing funding for the Tourism matching grant program, extending and enhancing the New York State Bill tax credit, indexing the minimum wage to inflation, and establishing legislation to enable the creation of tourism improvement districts.
- In my report today, I'm going to briefly highlight some tourism related news and announcements since we last met in January.
- But first I wanted to welcome Kelly Blazosky as our newest TAC member.
- Kelly has been executive in the tourism industry for 23 years and serves as the President of Oneida County Tourism since 2009. She is the immediate past chair of the central New York Vacation Region and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the New York State Destination Market Organization and Canal New York. She is a member of International Albany Chapter, former board member of the New York State Tourism Industry Association and the Adirondack North Country Association.
- The governor appointed Kelly to the Tourism Advisory Council in February.
- Kelly's going to speak more about Central New York region later meeting to give us some more updates on the region.
- Last month, the Governor released her executive budget, which outlines continued support with the tourism industry, funding cultural organizations, and supporting Island New York programming to invest in critical infrastructure projects and state parks and public transit hubs.

- Executive budget proposes \$58.5 million for the Island New York program and advertising campaigns, which attract visitors from around the world. This includes an additional round of \$15 million in competitive funding through the Market New York program.
- Additionally, the executive budget supports the tourism industry through extending New York and theatrical production tax credit, investing \$200 million in the statewide park system, investing 14 million for maintenance and improvements of the state fairgrounds, \$845 million in new economic and community development funding, including seventh round of the Downtown Revitalization initiative, the capital funding for the Regional Development Authority, \$455 million to fund redevelopment of Belmont Park, creating new tracks and parking, and building a new clubhouse and continued modernization of major transit hubs, including the Gateway Hudson Tunnel Project, \$18.5 billion improvements to JK Airport, and \$52 billion for MTA capital programs to update accessibility on subways, upgrade tolling systems, and improve Penn Station access.
- Last month, the Governor also announced that annual attendance at New York State's Parks historic sites, campgrounds and Trails saw 79.5 million visits in 2022. That was a record attendance. Total visit statewide included increased by more than 1 million compared to the previous year.
- Governor's commitment to ensure that the investment in parks and recreation will pay off for New Yorkers and visitors alike. New York State Park attendance has been steadily climbing for more than a decade, rising nearly 43% since 2008.
- Among the most visited state parks in 2022 was Niagara Falls.
- For Taste NY, the Governor also kicked off the state's 10-year anniversary celebrations for New York. New York's official eat local, drink local program at the Finger Lakes Welcome Center in Geneva. The event showcased the diversity in uniqueness of New York state's farmers and food and beverage producers, as well as regional tourism destinations.
- Over the past 10 years, Taste New York has generated over \$100 million in economic impact to New York State producers. Products can now be found in nearly 70 locations across New York State, including the 11 regional welcome Centers, airports, state Parks, and the Javits Center.
- Over the last decade, Taste New York has also partnered with major sports venues and farm partnerships with high profile event organizers to bring tasting York products to major sporting events such as the PGA tour, the 2023 FISU World University Games, and the Saratoga Racecourse.
- This past weekend was also the Free Snowmobile weekend across New York State from March 3rd to 5th this year, and annually thereafter, the first consecutive Saturday and Sunday in March will be free for all State and Canadian snowmobilers. During the weekend, the requirements to register in New York was waived for properly registered and insured out-of-state snowmobilers who wish to explore New York's 10,500 miles of trails.
- This promotion reinforces the importance of winter tourism activities, state local economies, and the commitment to continue this annual tradition at same time each year, which will help I LOVE NY encourage visitors to return to the state more consistently and further in advance, and hopefully spur annual traditions for guests to visit in the years to come.

III. I LOVE NY Report

ROSS LEVI:

- Thank you, Christine. Welcome everybody to Capital District at Albany Historic Capital Building. I wish could give you all a tour, it's a great building with a lot of great history.
- This is the time of year that I LOVE NY and our tourism department is engaged in our planning for the upcoming fiscal year. So in the coming weeks, we are working on putting together work plans, that are informed not only by our assessments of what's happened, during the prior fiscal year's work, but also from ongoing market research that we do, travel trends that we're aware of.
- A few trends that we are keeping an eye on:
- First of all, travelers' desires to plan more staycations. The idea of staying closer to home, in this case, not just staying home and traveling nearby, but staying nearby even if at a hotel.

- Affordability in lodging and activities is important for the economy. More frequent, and shorter getaways. Rather than it just being about that one big vacation of the year, that there's the idea of going away a few times a year, even if that's not necessarily for a week, that may be just for a long weekend, that kind of thing.
- And the desire for an easier trip planning process. This was actually really interesting, and I've heard it before. When we did focus groups years ago, we heard that one of the reasons people liked New York State was how easy it was to vacation. You didn't have to plan much ahead of time and no need to worry about airport security.
- The anxiety planning vacations is apparently very high for people and vacations that are easier to do have as much appeal as being on vacation itself. So that's a trend, hopefully that's going to benefit New York.
- So, we look forward to sharing more details about our plans as they develop and come together in the upcoming weeks and months.
- In the meantime, of course, we're still busy promoting winter in New York, at least the end of March, hopefully into April.
- Spring skiing is a big thing, for sure, and we need to remind people that even if they don't see snow out their windows, there snow the mountain. Spring is a great time to enjoy that time. The wisdom I got from my colleagues in the ski industry who told me better to have an inch in Long Island than six inches on the mountain, because you can always produce snow on the mountain, but getting people in the mindset and being aware that skiing is good is the hard part. So we're trying to focus more on promoting winter through all our channels.
- For example, we hosted travel journalists on our first post Covid group fam tour this past week, and I joined the journalists in the Hudson Valley for writers from such as Cosmo and Thrillist. They're visiting boutique hotels in Kingston, enjoying skiing in the Catskills Mountains.
- Our next group press trip is later this month with the theme of a spring detox from the city to visit spas and popular outdoor attractions in Hudson Valley to relax and recharge. Serving wellness is an important trend that travelers and journalists care about.
- Another promotion, the I LOVE NY LGBTQ program, working with the Aspen Gay Ski Week. One of the biggest, LGBTQ ski events in the nation, for their 46th annual celebration in January. It was attended by over 1500 guests for a full week of events gathering. We saw this partnership as a good opportunity to promote, the program and New York during winter, especially all of the nation, to go and be a part of this week as most of I LOVE NY LGBTQ programs happen in during the summer.
- As part of that partnership, we received, full page placements in the 3000 printed program guides, logo placement on their website, event materials and inclusion of the New York City LGBTQ guide and branded meetings that we had made, over 1500 gift bags that were distributed to their guests. So we hope that gave them the incentive and the encouragement to come and visit New York for their next trip.
- On the international front, 2022 was a year transition. Coincidentally, all our international rep contracts came to the end of their terms during 2022. That means lots of bidding. We're happy to announce, that our Canada, United Kingdom, and Germany contracts were just finalized.
- Reach Global is returning as our Canadian representation. KBC in PR and marketing is our new United Kingdom rep and Whiteman Tourism Services is our new German rep.
- Our Australian contract is not far behind. They've been identified just finishing the contract process.
- Each firm, as you know, serves as our I LOVE NY office markets, acting as I LOVE NY's representative responsible for travel, trade, sales, marketing, and public relations in their respective countries. They focus on driving visitation throughout the state and encouraging travelers to extend their trips, explore the extension, extensive range of visitor experiences available across our region. Their work can include things like, training, travel agents and tour operators up New York State product, growing the number of New York State vacation itineraries sold by agents and operators, facility marketing campaigns and co-ops, and pitching New York State tourism to international travelers.

- As an example, KBC has already attended several trade shows on our behalf, including Holiday World in Dublin, which some of you know, and destinations London.
- Most recently, GTI are outgoing Australian rep partner, New York team to represent the state at the BRAND USA Australian B2B Day, and BRAND USA often Travel Agent Expo, which had over 150 tour operators travel from across New Zealand. GTI was able to hold the meeting with Monte Airlines hotels, and holidays to discuss support and marketing of their new direct service from JFK starting in June 2023. You heard about that at the last meeting, those flights coming from New Zealand and from Australia directly to the East Coast, are going to create very important opportunities for us.
- Those events were our first in-country activations in Australia since Covid and are being done now to capitalize on the significant investment that I was alluding to.
- We look forward to participating in IPW, coming to San Antonio in May. We'll of course look forward to reporting back to TAC at our next meeting, which will be just a couple of weeks after that.
- Hopefully you saw that on February 24th, Governor Hochul announced for I LOVE NY a Black Travel Initiative. It was a very exciting announcement, part of Black History Month. This initiative is designed to grow New York State tourism and encourage black travel visitation.
- The announcement was made at the Alley American Dance Theater. A very appropriate place for Black History Month.
- In attendance were member George Ntim, as well as tourism and partners from New York City and Company, Travel Unity was also there, as well as attractions such as the Hip-Hop Museum, the Jackie Robinson Museum. There was a short program which was kicked off incredibly moving piece, from the dancers every time I see the, I'm just floored. It's amazing, no pun intended.
- The governor spoke for about 10 minutes, sharing her travels throughout York State and her passion for the wealth of attractions and activities that the state has to offer black travelers. She really spoke from the heart. In all these states she has seen and done so much, and she wants New York State to share these stories. We're going to share a quick moment after it comes from that advance.
- ***Plays video***
- So if you want to see the whole thing, it is available on the Governor's website. I encourage you take a look.
- So, as the governor said, that's just a teaser, but that gives you a sense of really the incredible wealth of attractions and activities we've had for this market segment. It's obviously building on success of our other state tourism programs, our segment programs like New York LGBTQ, and Accessible New York. This is another opportunity to highlight the state in specific travel communities.
- We're currently in the phase of engaging in data collection and stakeholder outreach to inform the effective development of this program. We can go out there now, talk to people and, and make sure we're getting all information we need to do this effectively. So we're conducting the market research. We're connecting with tourism and partners across the state about how we can best support their efforts.
- There are people that have been in this sector for a long time. Our goal is to amplify and unify what's already going out there. So both consumers facing elements and travel trade efforts of the Black Travel Initiative in the upcoming weeks and months. In the meantime, businesses and organizations that operate attractions, destinations, events, and services of interest to black travelers are encouraged to make sure they're in the of I LOVE NY database. So they can be on iloveny.com, in the new mobile app, and any other appropriate New York platform. So more information and qualification criteria are available moving forward.
- As I mentioned in our last meeting, I LOVE NY participated in the American Bus Association marketplace last month in Detroit. The marketplace was attended by 360 top bus tour operators shows very much back in full force.
- There were numerous opportunities to connect with operators. Monday sort of officially has become New York Day, by virtue of us hosting a lot with DMO of New York and breakfast in Morning. You could see the picture there. Then we had broadway.com host luncheon promoting Broadway shows.

And then in that evening, we have a New York State dinner. So basically people really heard about New York all throughout that day.

- During the breakfast, we presented out new developments at market, and then as we've done for a few years now, now a tradition, we provided a comedian in partnership with the National Comedy Center. The comedian, Pat Hazel performed. He's a former writer of Seinfeld. People literally laughing to tears. He knew this was a traveling group, so he started slides literally from his family vacations from when he was a kid, making fun of his family. So our theme was basically start your day with a laugh and it was a great way to get people open and hearing about New York State.
- In addition to that, obviously the actual meetings were an important part of that. I participated nearly 40 meetings back-to-back for about seven minutes a piece, one to the other, talking to operators who are interested in selling new or additional New York State products for their clients.
- There's a real receptivity in New York state, which is really great to hear. As a result of those appointments and hosting breakfast, the division will continue our work building a database of contact with tour operators to continue pitching New York State, both on our own and in partnership with our local TPA partner, sharing that information, and providing opportunities, emerging developments across the state.
- That concludes my report.

Alexandra Stanton: Ross, I am curious. I saw that you retained some of our international operator contracts. I think you have found you've swapped out a contractor to, I'm curious if you can elaborate a bit about the metrics that would make you retain an international consultant or agency versus change.

Ross Levi: Yeah. So it is, as you can imagine, it's a state RFP process. So actually we don't get any favorability by being our current. It's not a decision of, whether we want to keep a current one or not. There is a set of time for a contract and the state kind wants to keep that to two to four years, basically. When the contract is up, it's as if you've never had a rep just start the process again, the RFP out that criteria. We look at their experience, their connections, who are there other clients, and also looking forward, they have to sort of basically put together a mini proposal in terms of how they promote New York State.

What do they think are our unique attributes or what do you, what do they think would be the best way to sell us at respective markets? Go through an interview process, they're scored by committee, the highest score in, in combination with their budget and how much they've proposed. Cause the state always has to take cost to consideration, ends up at the end result of rules selected.

Alexandra Stanton: The thing on the RFP that says if they've previously worked in a tourism capacity that we can, were able, we should assess their past performance.

Ross Levi: Yes. Certainly we might, they have work have been working for tourism industry. And then beyond, like I said, I'm a member of that committee. Probably obviously, so it's important to me to see who their clients are. I'm interested, for example, have they ever represented a state DMO before? Cause sometimes we'll be folks that represented, other countries saying that's useful, but that, may not be as useful for us. So yeah, we look very concretely yet and they must provide work product in terms of what they've done for their clients.

They give sort of case studies, so that gives us a good sense of what they've done before, and like I said, addition for us specifically. I believe if that RFP is not still online, we certainly can get it if anyone wants to see, but obviously it changes, for whatever services we're looking for.

David Filipiak: You mentioned that you're asking them what they think New York can bring to the audience, their audiences. I assume you also give them some direction of, here are our strategies for the next two to three years.

Ross Levi: Not so much during the RFP process, to be honest. We kind want to hear with a bit of a clean slate what they think. It is a bit frankly of a test to hear like, what is your advice on our strategy? What do you think we should be doing in Germany or UK or Australia? And even if they're off the market still tells us a lot about their thinking and off the records, not even the right term, even if it doesn't align necessarily with our strategy, first of all, sometimes it gives us good ideas, it makes us rethink what we're doing. But even more so, it just tells us how they think. So no, we, we certainly lay out for just basics of who we are, what we do, and why we're involved in international markets. But we don't get very specific by market.

David Filipiak: I have another question, different topic. Is this the first time New York State has done a black travel outreach program or are we bringing it back?

Ross Levi: Now obviously we've not been invisible to this population. We have had a black section on our website. We are very conscious about inclusive imagery throughout all of our platforms. So there's several different ways we've been involved, but now this is the first time we've had a named specific ongoing program, like I said, sometimes the way we have for accessible New York, New York LGBTQ.

David Filipiak: And you mentioned accessibility and LGBTQ. Are there other segments you might have on the horizon that you have your eyes out that as we're expanding? More inclusivity?

Ross Levi: Sure. I don't want to say more except to say that, yes, we're constantly looking for new opportunities. We know this isn't the end of it. We know that there are a lot of inclusivity for a lack of a better term, travel segments. So we're always looking for new opportunities. And as you've seen already with this progression, which has taken place over a number of years, we're going to be continuing to look opportunities.

Richard Gagliano: Part of that process is research, is where are opportunities, where do we have the right sort of traction to fill that opportunity, is there revenue based on it? So part of our decision, what segment to sort of focus on next is going to be based on market concerns as well.

David Filipiak: Right. I find it interesting. As you know, NYC and Company have become quite active in this strategy in the last couple of years. If there's any complimentary, or if we're welcoming a segment into New York City, would it just amplify more if we welcome a similar segment into the state as well?

Ross Levi: Yeah, that's a great point. We certainly have been aware of New York City closely to their initiative as well. We've continuing to talk to them and others. Frankly, not only New York City, there are other TPAs across the state. That's like important part of this as well to learn from them. But I think you're right, David, in terms of looking, going forward, that's helpful too to not just go into an area, that can be done better in a complimentary fashion.

Cristyne Nicholas: Do you have a suggestion, David?

David Filipiak: No, I'm curious. Well, I'm coming from a New York City perspective, but you're right. Western part of the state, I just know that this is a trend that I think will resonate with certain segments is making sure they feel welcomed in the state just by dedicated outreach.

Richard Gagliano: We need to work through, as we work through how this is executed, how much of the messaging is outside the state to this audience to come. How much Manhattan, York City go upstate, how much come down and vice versa. That's something still working through to find the best way to execute it.

Natasha Caputo: What suggestion on that though? I know for Westchester, we have a, it, it's the number one brochure. It flies off the shelves off the shelves like certain trailways. And in the PA turnpike is our African American heritage trail. And we are creating beautiful, like, sculptor gardens along the riverfront. One of the challenges, and I know the com working with the local communities is way finding and signage. So as you think about that program from a consistency because it brings it all together, honestly,

it comes from the state side, you know how we do the DOT farm trails and other things. So I just wanted to put that out there.

IV. Guest Speaker

Cristyne Nicholas

- Prior to the pandemic, TAC started an initiative, that every meeting we would have one of the 11 vacation regions' leaders come in to update us. We have heard from the Adirondacks, Greater Niagara, Finger Lakes, Hudson Valley, 1000 Islands and Long Island.
- Last meeting we heard from Corey Fram from the 1000 Islands, which was very interesting.
- Today, with Kelly's first meeting we thought it would be a great opportunity to talk about to learn more about Central New York and how we can work together and support this region as well.

Kelly Blazosky

- Thank you for the opportunity. It is an honor to be here and represent Central NY. I'll give you an overview of who we are, and the counties we represent.
- So I'll give you a snapshot of economic impact of the tourism industry in Central New York. This is from our tourism economic research. In 2021 we saw an 80% increase versus 2020. And it was the fastest growing region across the state. The best performing region with direct spend of 49% versus pre pandemic data from 2019.
- Oneida county rebounded at 64% of 2019 levels and was the highest rebound of any county in New York State. Food and beverage played a big role in that. It represented 18% spent.
- Our beyond the big capital program is our international campaign. We put this together and softly tested it in 2018. Really started to work on 19, and then we all, what happened, the world. So, it's our international campaign partnered at Central New York with Southern Catskills and Dutchess County Tourism. So we bring together the three regions for a suggested nine-day itinerary focusing on culinary craft beverage, outdoor activities in the iconic attractions of the region.
- So we're continuing with this messaging. It's really resonating, and garnering, attention, and summer shows, for example, IPW we'll be carrying that message again in May.
- Back to the reason why, food and beverage does so well. Our longstanding campaign is Bruce Central for the region and it's a consumer campaign process. Regions includes the eight counties of Central New York plus three Bordering counties.
- A couple fun facts ask about our two anchors is that F X Matt Brewery was the first to sell beer in the U.S. at the end prohibition in 1933. F X Matt Brewery was in DC the day that prohibition was repealed and literally pick up. It is also the official brewery of the HBO Game of Throne beers, which always still attracts people.
- The other thing that has really impacted our food and beverage sales is our cheese trail and our agri-tourism experience. It launched again, fall of 2019 just prior to the pandemic, but it's been a very successful consumer campaign. It's a self-guided Agri-tourism experience through the region.
- We have four counties involved in that. 19th producers and it's Madison, Oneida, Oswego, and Herkimer. When you put that together you get MOOH.
- It's been wildly successful. Our geographic region, we're right in the middle of the state, as I said, it's easy access open spaces, great for watchable wildlife experiences and outdoor recreation really contributed to the rebound, that we realized post covid and, and even getting through covid, people just looking for space. So it's lot of downstate people coming up state to enjoy space to be with their families and loved ones.
- This is Wolf Mountain Nature Center in Smyrna. They've got over 60 acres and their mission is to foster appreciation, understanding the value of the role of wolves and their natural environment. Abundance and waterways.
- Abundance of lakes and waterways in upstate that are significant attractors for recreational opportunities, paddling, fishing for leisure and for sport.
- This is crossing historic state park in Montgomery County and the Aron Railroad now is offering excursions, thrill last fall that the Tupper Lake excursion took place finally.
- It opens so much flexibility along the Oregon stops along the rail corridor communities. It'll be just much easier to present this product and it now creates the longest scenic rail excursion on the East coast.

- The rail bikes that are offered, Byron rail bikes as well as rail explorers in Cooperstown have been wildly popular for spring, summer, and fall activities.
- Experience the rail fortunately offers a diverse topography in the region with the Adirondack Mountains in the north, offering countless adventures like mountain biking to the canal corridor that bides the entire region and the rolling hills in the south.
- So we offer about any experience from high adventure to adventure. The old Canal State Park and the Empire State Trail course. The first dig for the Erie Canal was in Rome, and today Old Canal State Park and the Empire course visitors from across the globe. It's very attractive product on the international market as well.
- Central New York also blessed four Seasons, very healthy winters this year. We have over miles of snowmobile trails in the region, downhill ski areas, woods and hundreds of miles of cross-country trails fishing and the oldest curling club in the united, in the eastern US.
- The family fun experiences range from water safari adventures in old forged to unique water kind exploration, for example, at her diamond.
- Norm beach, two miles of beach in just iconic beachfront community. Looks like Jamaica. A beach in the middle of New York.
- So we're fortunate also to have two powerfully experiences in central New York. With the New York Power Authority, two educational centers, one in North and newest in Utica at the John Dyson New York Energy Zone. Slowly interactive, great experience for people of all ages and takes you really through New York State's entire history and into the future of power generation here at current state.
- This is Newburg in New Berlin. It's a premier motor cross destination for the United States. Boilermaker Road race, of course hosts over 19,000 runners with elite runners from around the world, has one of the largest wheelchair divisions in the us That's right. They're now post pandemic. They're getting there.
- And of course we host a DHL hockey game, also major arena leagues. Then of course history and current activity. The National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in camp to amazing golf courses throughout the region, Verona County. They're all key tourism drivers. Our history as well as the foundation for the region that has developed what we've developed into today can never forget our history course, museums, and historic sites.
- This is the classic museum in, in Norwich to you underground railroad sites the Garrett Smith Estate, Peterboro Peterborough, which was interesting, was happy to see that in the Black Travel Initiative are also important to our national level.
- National parks. The region does have a National Monument in Rome, which is a national park as well as the National Heritage Corridor. Having two relationships with the national parks.
- We've tied that together with our initiative a few years and we really do keep the initiative moving forward and continue with marketing every year. We connected that with, so we've connected over 50 scenic sites curated to bikers. Well, Cooperstown offer product, new product, that's their triple play pass for families and groups.
- Packaged ticketing offering, the more Museum, the museum, and the National Baseball Hall of Fame. And the per pass is good for an entire year for the purchase. You don't use that. You're there. You can make multiples to, and that's the, to the region. We have the National Shrine, it's the only completely excavated village in the United States, and same is the patron saint of Canada. So hence we have thousands of Canadians pilgrimage every year to our Lady of Martyrs.
- That's very important. Our, as well as arts and culture destinations, deliver unexpected experiences. This is an image of the reflecting at the they host an amazing collection of owner and Rockwell. And, we have, a long list of arts and cultural experiences there.
- As well as interactive projects like Thema Projection Festival in thousands of visitors for an immersive projection mapping experience throughout downtown, Broadway theater is mine. And well on stage at the, the Stanley Theater of Utica, they host an annual Broadway series. It has become a premier destination. Utica has as well as for, for the Stanley Theater, for tech show production.
- So every year, literally they have a list of shows that want to tech in Utica. They have to turn them away. They're so busy and it can only take a couple a year. And then Stanley is also a certified sound stage of attracting film production. And that tax credit is still important as an incentive for, for Utica. For Cooperstown cause we're all active in that marketplace. And this year also, this is just newly announced the lineup for this year as well.

- And of course that is Cooperstown Festival Opera Musical Theater. This year we are celebrating 30 years of Turning Stone Resort Casino. Hosting visitors from around the world. They've really transformed Central New York tourism product. They continue to expand and develop their main campus of Verona and have invested considerable in considerably in nearby Silicon Beach with the buildout of the Cove and all of the experiences that they've brought there. so I mean, that's everything. The region is really great. I have touched only the basics.
- With workforce issues and housing, Turning Stone has had to build housing to attract people to be able to give them a decent place to stay and their underwriting costs of, of living for new employees that they're attracted to the region. So still, so we're rebounding greatly and we're very happy, but there are still big issues.

Cristyne Nicholas: Thank you, Kelly. Any questions? I have a question. There is a project proposed, I believe it's in Utica. It's a sports tourism project, a sports facility?

Kelly Blazosky: Yes, it's open. That's Nexus. It's open. They just cut the ribbon on it December, December 5th. Hockey is their main focus, amateur hockey. But it does have changeable surfaces such as a pipe and drape for a conference.

David Filipiak: I'm curious, our last meeting, we heard about some challenges internationally. It was a region closer to the Canadian border that the Canadian tourists weren't coming to that region because it was too close and not deemed worth the hassle. Have you seen a similar lopsided impact or are Canadians starting to come back?

Kelly Blazosky: They're starting to the region to come back to the region. Yeah, absolutely.

Dan Fuller: Just before, the meeting I was talking to Ross and, and I had mentioned that we might have a record here this year and he was all excited, but the record was in the wrong way. It was probably before the least amount of natural snow we received this year. And really what that's done is put a spotlight on snow making. And I think the adage that was mentioned earlier about an inch of snow in Long Island or any of our metropolitan areas really makes a big difference. So that kind of spotlights what we need to do from an educational standpoint because all winter we provided pretty good surface and great skiing conditions across the whole state. So, as we go forward, it's critical for our industry in New York really to improve our ability to make snow.

Cristyne Nicholas: Even though you were able to provide the service, were able to track it?

Dan Fuller: Yeah, we did. I think maybe just to build on Kelly's remark, we started to see some of the Canadian market come back in February, which was good. And we look forward maybe to that increasing this next year. But, as I hear Kelly's remarks today, that's one region in New York, multiply times all the other regions and boy we have such a great tourism exploration across the State. It's just unbelievable.

David Filipiak: Is there any initial information on the impact of the world University games in the Adirondacks and Lake Placid area?

Richard Gagliano: That report is being worked on. I don't know when that is due to be released, but I know that's being on right now. There's supposed to be a summary reported.

Thank you very much, everyone.

I need motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned: 12:02pm

- Motion approved by Natasha Caputo
- Motion second by David Filipiak

Next TAC meeting: May 31st at 11:00am in NYC



**NEW YORK STATE
TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL**

May 31, 2023

I ♥ NY



**Empire State
Development**

CHAIR'S REPORT

FY 23/24 NEW YORK STATE BUDGET

The FY24 state budget includes the following:

- ✓ Extending the NYC Musical & Theatrical Production tax credit
- ✓ \$455M for Belmont Racetrack
- ✓ \$200M for the NYS Parks
- ✓ \$92.5M for ORDA capital projects
- ✓ \$35M to improve subway service
- ✓ \$30M for zoos, botanical gardens and aquariums
- ✓ \$7.5M for new LGBTQ+ Museum
- ✓ \$2M to support county fairs



\$42M IN NYSCA AWARDS

👉 Culture 👉 Recreation 👉 Economic Development

APRIL 25, 2023 | Albany, NY

Governor Hochul Announces \$42 Million Investment in Small and Mid-Sized Capital Projects for Arts and Cultural Organizations



2024 WOMEN'S HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

Event Recreation

APRIL 16, 2023 | Albany, NY

Governor Hochul Announces Utica Selected as the Host City For The 2024 International Ice Hockey Federation World Women's Championship



ERIE CANAL OPENING



I LOVE NY REPORT

FY 2024 TOURISM BUDGET

- \$15M for Round 13 of Market New York
- \$3.45M for Tourism Matching Funds
- \$45M for Economic Development Initiatives
- \$2.5M for I LOVE NY programming
- \$1M for museum study





I LOVE NY MARKETING EFFORTS



UPDATED CONSUMER TRAVEL INSIGHTS

- Consumer research was conducted this past winter regarding post-COVID lockdown travel insights
- Qualitative research conducted to better understand the travel attitudes, behaviors and needs of target audiences and uncover how New York State best serves them as tourism destination
- Research findings were leveraged in the execution of Summer '23 I LOVE NY marketing assets

RESEARCH FINDINGS & I LOVE NY'S ROLE

Highlights:

- Planners are overwhelmingly worried about and feel pressure to choose the “best” destination that pleases everyone
- Self-imposed stress resulting from planning a vacation can negatively impact the overall experience
- Preference for shorter road trips and “City” visits have surpassed “resort vacations” and longer distant trips
- Accessibility and convenience are key to reducing anxiety about travel

I LOVE NY Approach

- Clearly communicate the inherent benefits of a New York State vacation (i.e. variety of activities, proximity to residents/drive markets, relatively short/simple planning process) to address concerns of travelers and demonstrate that New York State is the ideal getaway destination



SUMMER '23 BROADCAST TV





SUMMER '23 CAMPAIGN

IT'S **EASY**
TO LOVE
NEW YORK.





2023 MOBILE TOUR



MOBILE TOUR EXPERIENCE OVERVIEW

- Designed to be a fully immersive experience, where digital and practical elements combine to give visitors a taste of all that New York State has to offer.
- Interactive getaway pods each feature unique elements for guests
- Digital kiosks highlight top attractions and add a deeper level of education and engagement
- Complementing our pods is a fun photo booth, prize wheel, and iconic I LOVE NY sculpture.

Interactive Elements:

- 6 Getaway Pods/ Educational Kiosks
- Photo Booth + Props
- New York State Map
- Literature Stands
- I LOVE NY Sculpture
- Survey Area + Prize Wheel
- Signage

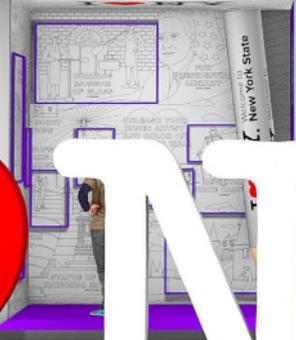




DISCOVER THE OUTDOORS

EXPLORE ART, CULTURAL, & HISTORIC DESTINATIONS

CATCH SPORTS ATTRACTIONS



I ♥ NYTM

FUN FOR THE YOUNG
& YOUNG-AT-HEART

RELAX & UNWIND

TASTE THE LOCAL FLAVORS



CURRENT SUMMER '23 MOBILE TOUR SCHEDULE

Event Dates	Event	Location	Region
May 27-28	Bethpage Air Show	Jones Beach	Long Island
June 2-3	Taste of Syracuse	Syracuse	Finger Lakes
June 10	116th Street Festival	Manhattan	New York City
June 16-18	Formula 1 Canadian Grand Prix	Montreal, Quebec	Canada
June 24-25	Adirondacks Welcome Center	Queensbury	Adirondacks
July 1-2	Capital Region Welcome Center	Hannacroix	Capital-Saratoga
July 4	Empire State Plaza 4th of July Celebration	Albany	Capital-Saratoga
July 8-9	Taste of Buffalo	Buffalo	Greater Niagara
July 15-16	Finger Lakes Welcome Center	Geneva	Finger Lakes
July 23	Baseball Hall of Fame Induction Weekend	Cooperstown	Central New York
July 28-30	New Jersey Festival of Ballooning	Readington, NJ	New Jersey
August 5	NYC Summer Streets	Manhattan	New York City
August 18-20	Go Bowling at the Glen - NASCAR Race Weekend	Watkins Glen	Finger Lakes
August 23 – Sept. 4	Great New York State Fair	Syracuse	Finger Lakes



2023 PGA CHAMPIONSHIP



2023 PGA CHAMPIONSHIP



The New York State Tasting Yard,
featuring a 20x20
I LOVE NY–Taste NY
co-branded sampling tent



2023 PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

I LOVE NY app on interactive kiosk



I LOVE NY statue and photo opportunity, with unique PGA photo frame



I LOVE NY video highlighting top summer attractions



6 sets of I LOVE NY signage



PRIDE TOUR – JUNE 2023



PRIDE TOUR EXPERIENCE OVERVIEW

- Eye-catching footprint that highlights some of the best & most LGBTQ-friendly destinations throughout New York State
- Includes a fun and unique Kaleidoscope photo moment and chance to spin the I LOVE NY prize wheel

Interactive Elements:

- Kaleidoscope photo moment
- Pillars featuring top NYS attractions
- I LOVE NY freestanding sculpture photo opp
- Newsletter sign-up station & Prize Wheel
- Signage
- Literature stands

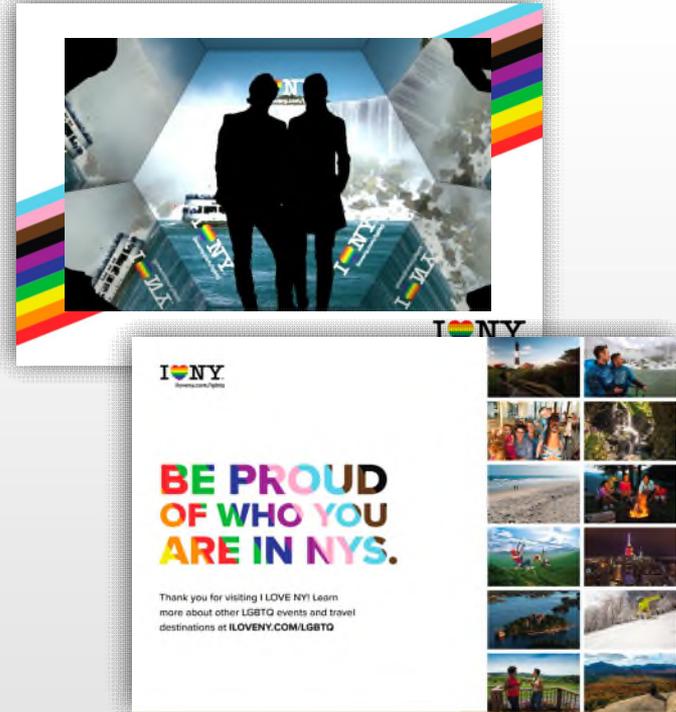


KALEIDOSCOPE PHOTO MOMENT

Kaleidoscope



Printed Photo Frame





CURRENT SUMMER '23 PRIDE TOUR SCHEDULE

Event Dates	Event	Location	Region
June 4	Philly Pride	Philadelphia, PA	Pennsylvania
June 11	Long Island Pride	Farmingdale	Long Island
June 24	Harlem Pride	New York	New York City
June 25	New York City Pride	New York	New York City
June 29	Syracuse Mets Pride Night	Syracuse	Finger Lakes



TRAVEL TRADE UPDATES



INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP



IPW 2023



INDUSTRY RELATIONS



INDUSTRY CONFERENCES



AMNH GILDER CENTER OPENING

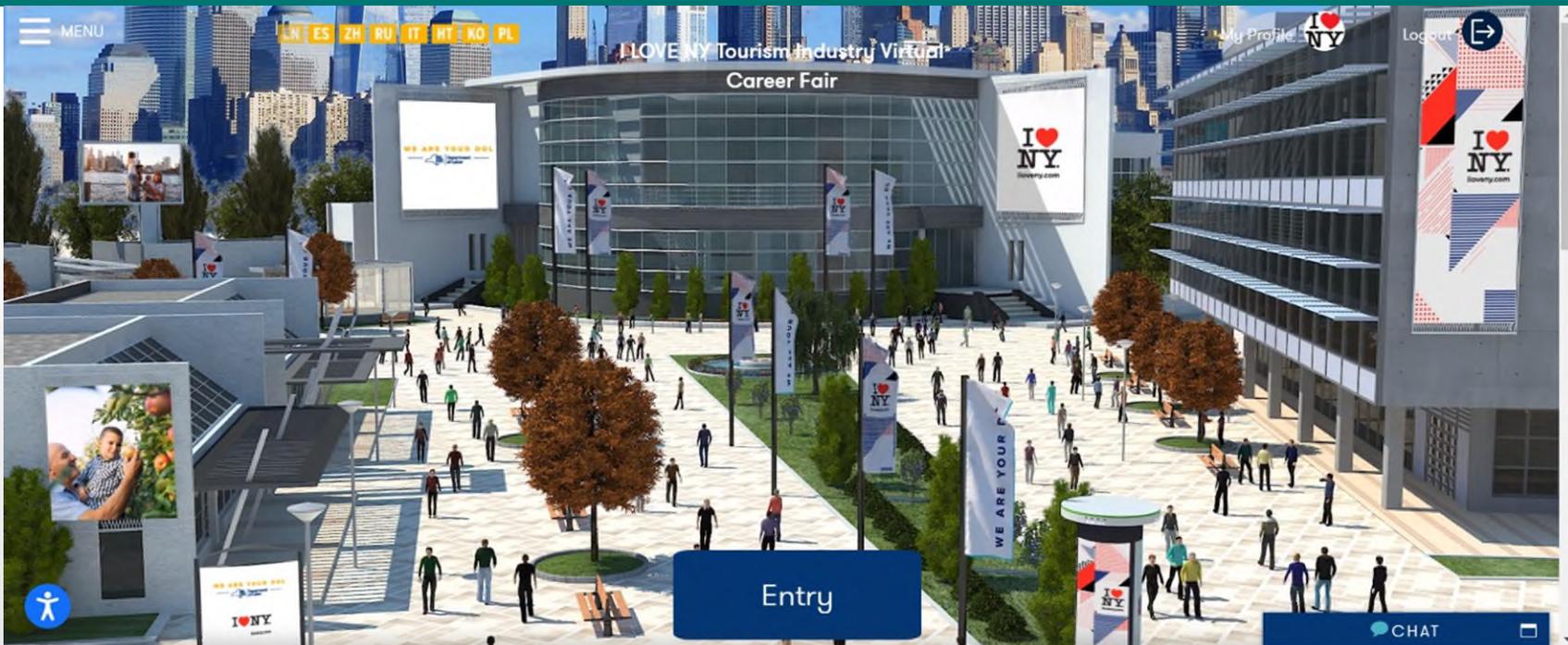




TOURISM PROGRAMS & FUNDING



TOURISM VIRTUAL JOB FAIR



BLACK TRAVEL PROGRAM



TOURISM FUNDING UPDATES

Market New York Round 13

- CFA opened May 14
- Applications due July 28, 2023
- Webinar – June 14, 2023

Matching Funds

- 2023 program funds disbursed to eligible grantees
- Q1 reporting closing
- \$3.45M has been appropriated for 2024

Meet in New York

- Deadline for applications - June 30, 2023
- Deadline for events - December 31, 2025
- The program has a few pending large-scale events

EDA

- 30 Subawards totaling \$14.2 million
- Applications exceeded \$28.5 million

Upcoming Webinar

Market New York – Tourism Grant Program

Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 11AM EST

[REGISTER HERE](#)



LOOK AHEAD



SPRING PATH THROUGH HISTORY WEEKEND



PLACES
TO GO

THINGS
TO DO



PLACES
TO STAY

EVENTS

BLOG

PLAN
YOUR TRIP



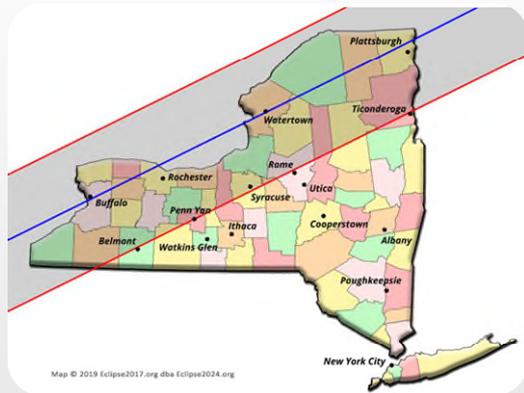
WEEKENDS

June 17-19 | October 7-9

Lockport Locks

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNIVERSARIES

**2024
Total Solar
Eclipse**



**2025
200th Anniversary of the
Erie Canal Completion**



**2026
Semiquincentennial
of the United States**



I♥NY[™]

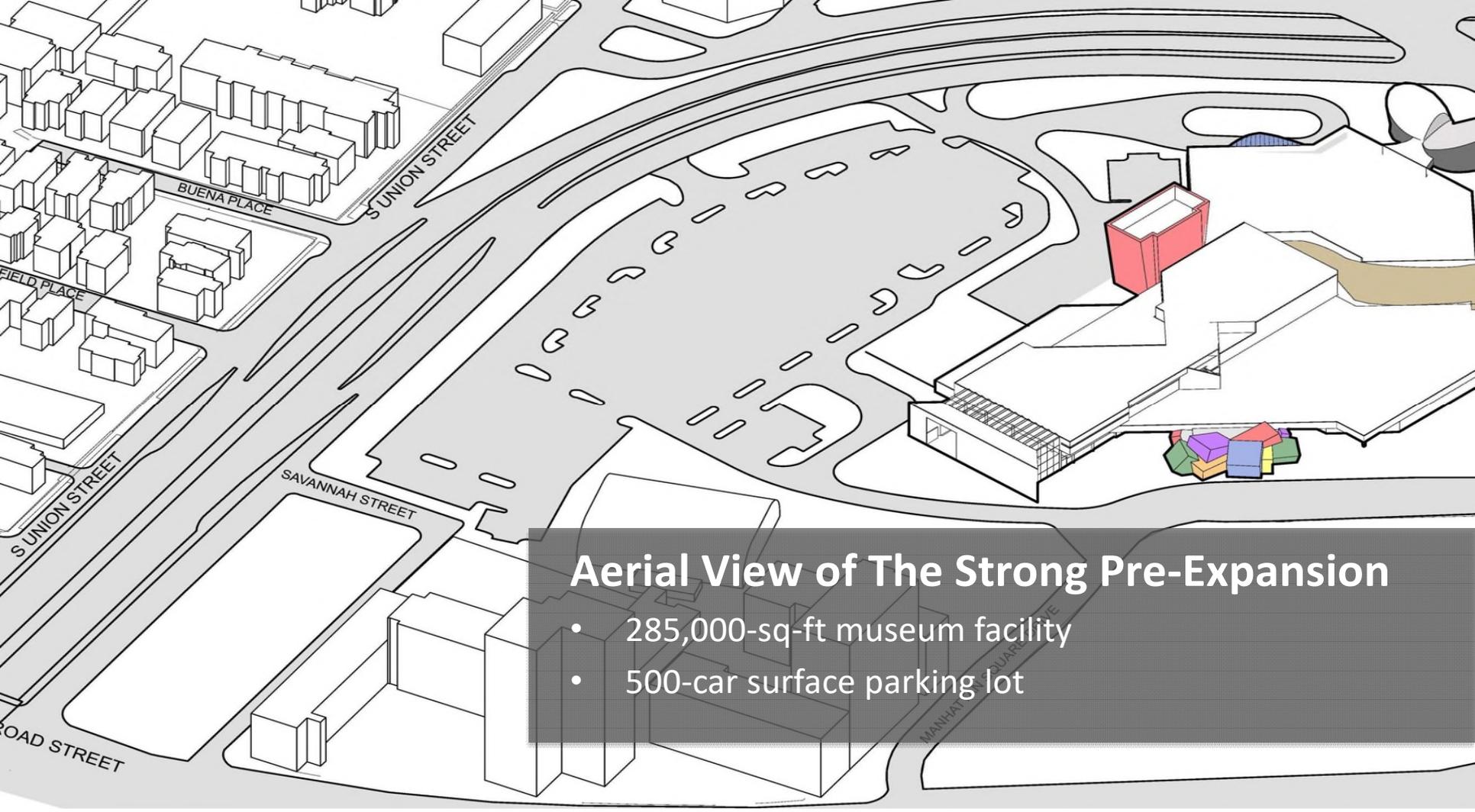
IT'S EASY TO LOVE NY

I♥NY[®]

the strong

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PLAY





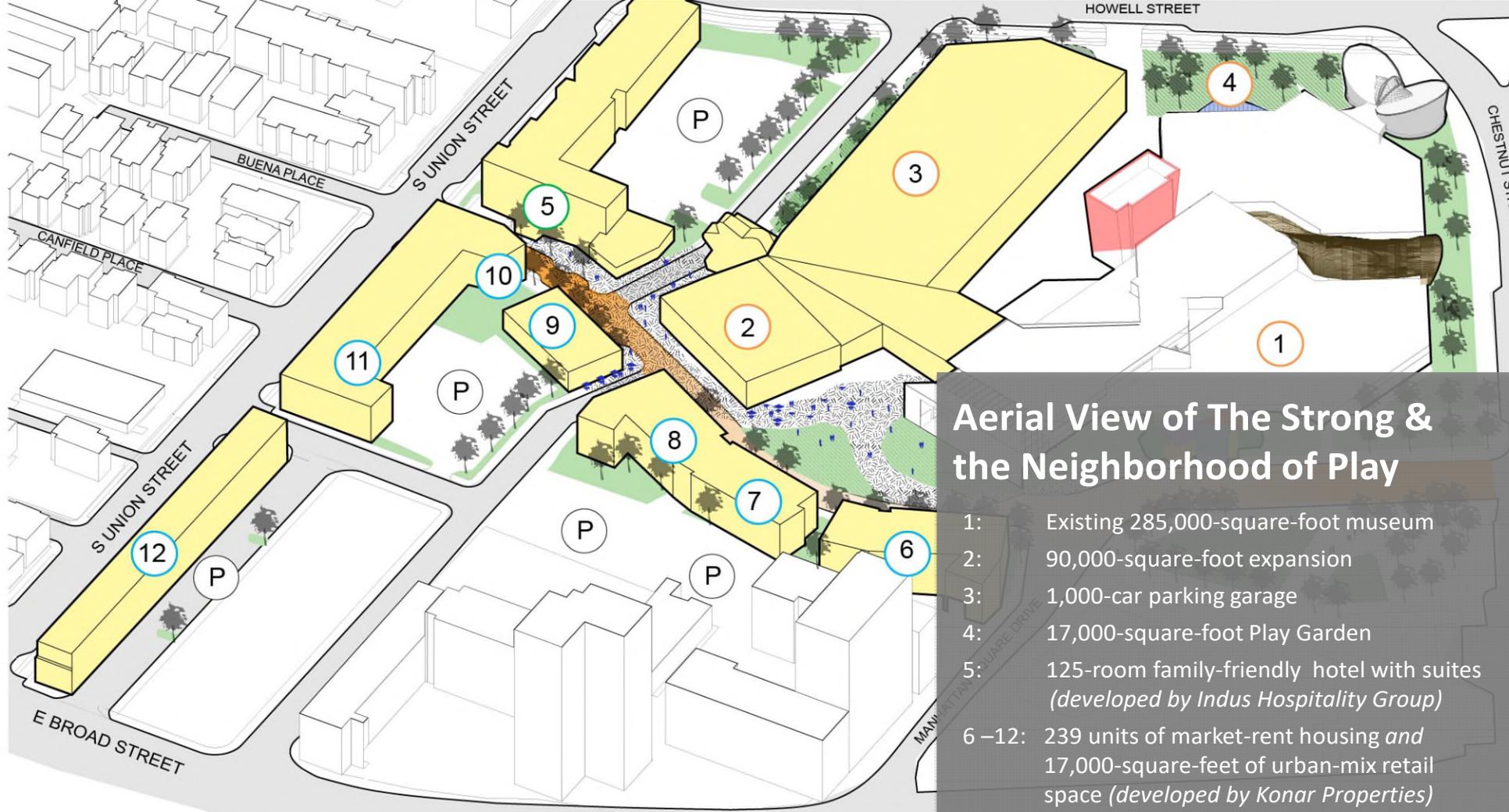
Aerial View of The Strong Pre-Expansion

- 285,000-sq-ft museum facility
- 500-car surface parking lot



Growing our National Audience & Reach

- In 2015, market research showed that with the expansion and broader advertising, The Strong could attract 535,000 additional annual visitors.
- Based on that study, we conservatively projected an additional 400,000 visitors per year.
- In light of the pandemic, we fielded a follow-up study in 2020 to assess the ongoing validity of those results.
- That study confirmed the findings, showed we had already increased awareness in key markets, and affirmed we will be able attract nearly 1 million guests per year by 2026.



Aerial View of The Strong & the Neighborhood of Play

- 1: Existing 285,000-square-foot museum
- 2: 90,000-square-foot expansion
- 3: 1,000-car parking garage
- 4: 17,000-square-foot Play Garden
- 5: 125-room family-friendly hotel with suites (developed by Indus Hospitality Group)
- 6-12: 239 units of market-rent housing and 17,000-square-feet of urban-mix retail space (developed by Konar Properties)



Our partner, Konar Properties, has completed construction on the residential and retail elements of the neighborhood. Our hotel partner, Indus Hospitality, continues work on a new family-friendly and play-themed Hampton Inn and Suites, with plans to open in June 2023.

Coming June 30, 2023!



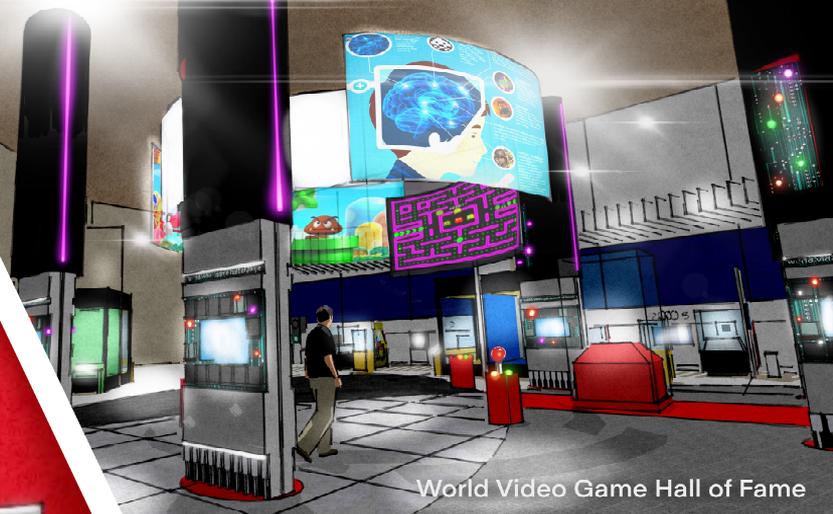
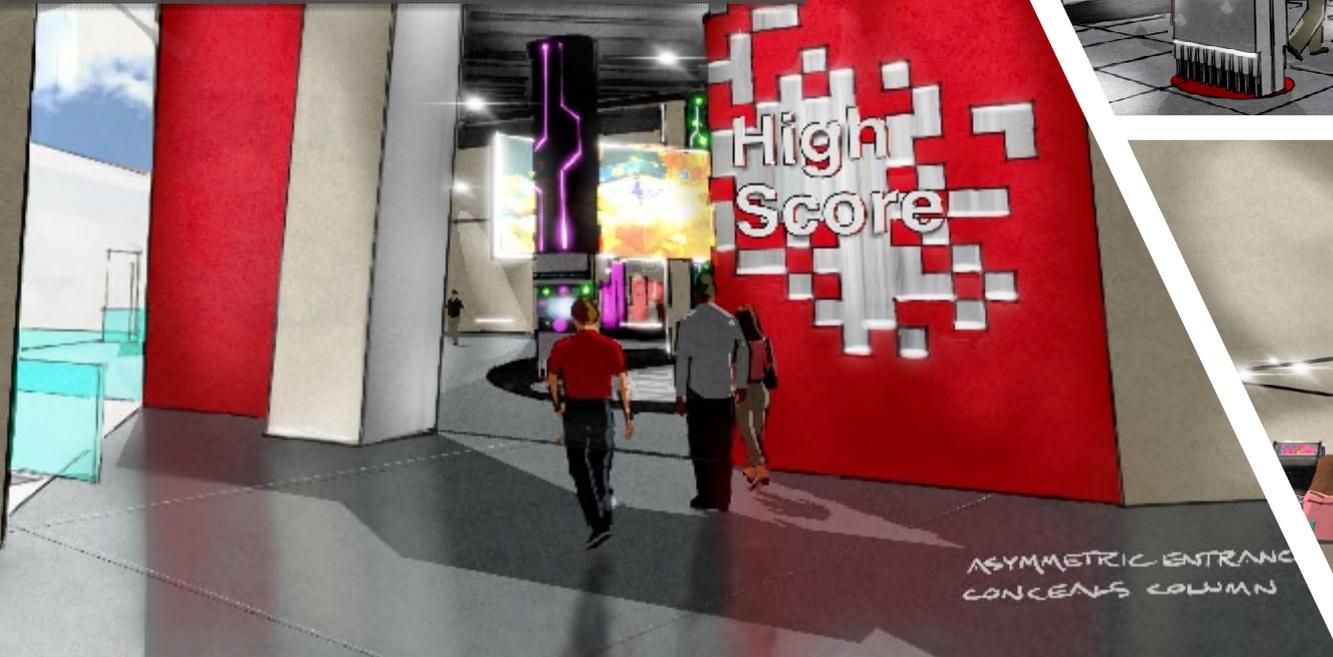


This is where the play and the fun, begin! In the new welcome atrium, the ceilings stretch to the sky. Colorful tile pathways guide wayfinding while ceiling-to-floor windows flood the space with light, activating the surrounding outdoor spaces by minimizing the visual barrier between the interior and the exterior.





HIGH SCORE will serve as the new home of The Strong's World Video Game Hall of Fame and other one-of-a-kind, educational interactives that look at various aspects of gaming and making games.



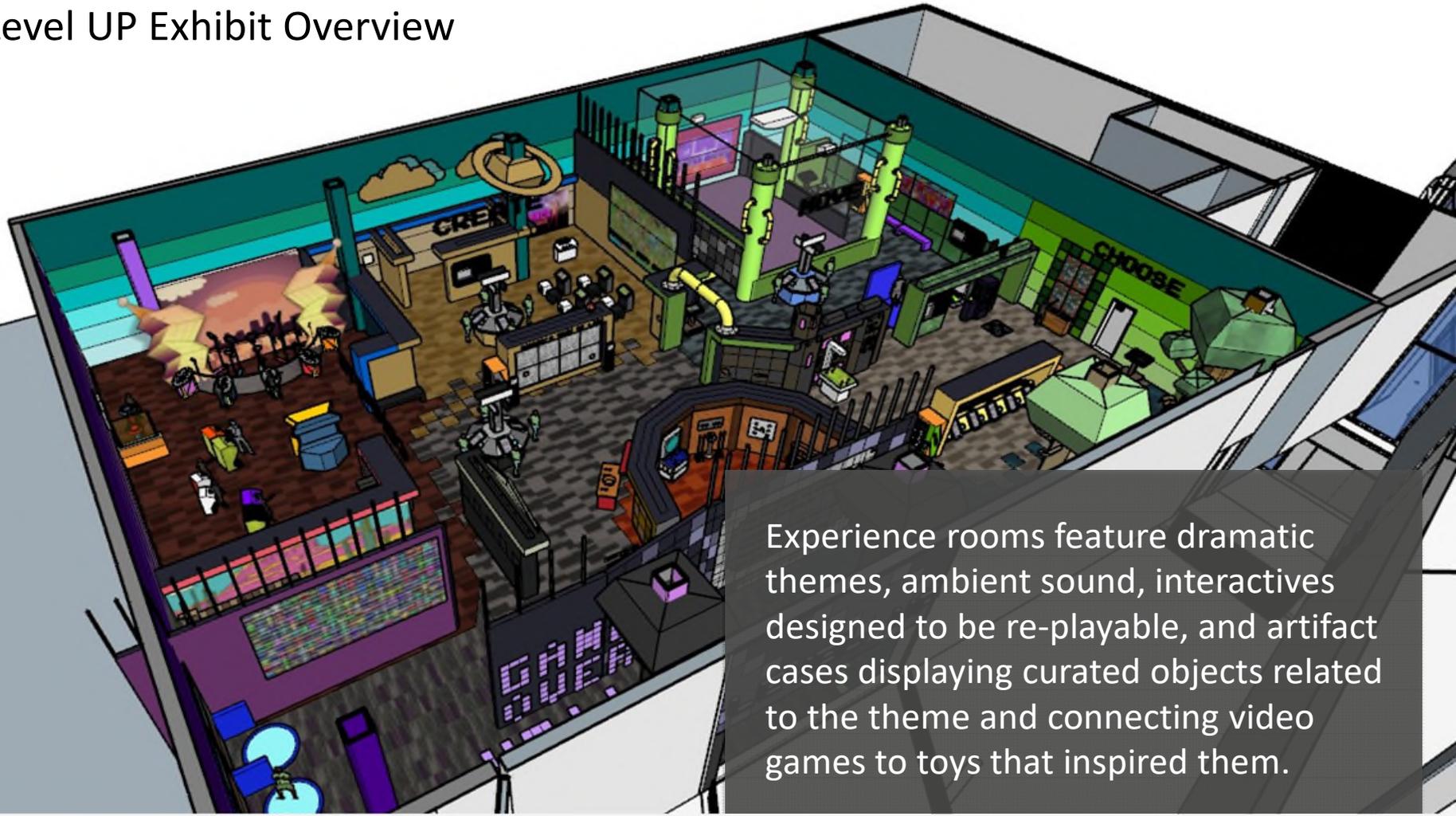


Surrounding the WVGHOFF rotunda will be six interactive areas that examine the art, play, storytelling, business, technological, and societal aspects of video games.





Level UP Exhibit Overview



Experience rooms feature dramatic themes, ambient sound, interactives designed to be re-playable, and artifact cases displaying curated objects related to the theme and connecting video games to toys that inspired them.

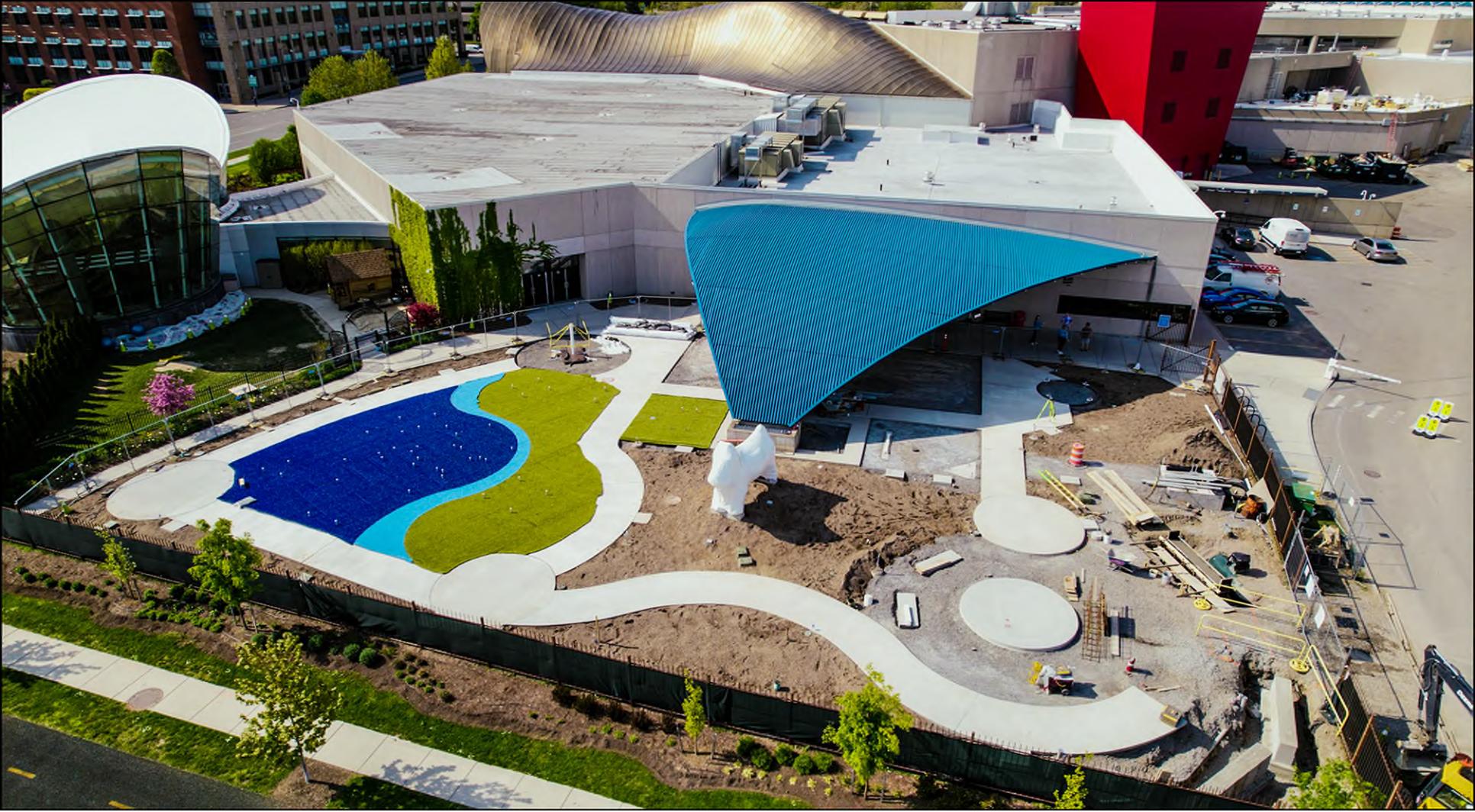




Hasbro Play Garden, 17,000-square-foot, board-game-themed, outdoor play space will encourage physical and collaborative play among guests of all ages and abilities while celebrating tabletop games that shaped how we play.

PLAY GARDEN







Growth that Will Benefit All

The Strong continues to spearhead work with regional partners to market Western New York as a broader destination of choice.

Our PlayRochester project partners have included:

- Seneca Park Zoo
- Rochester Museum and Science Center
- George Eastman Museum
- Genesee Country Village & Museum
- Wegmans
- Indus Hospitality Group
- Market New York
- Seabreeze Amusement Park
- Rochester Red Wings



Looking to the Future

- Since 2018, The Strong has invested \$7M+ in marketing the museum to both local and new regional markets.
- Additional funding resources will be paramount for success as we strive for 1 million guests in 2026.
- Help us spread the word by promoting the museum and all the Neighborhood of Play has to offer potential guests across New York State and the region.